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The
Sunset Beacon

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RV Parking Remains a Contentious Housing Issue

By Thomas K. Pendergast

The latest development in the City's ongoing struggle to deal with people living in recreational vehicles (RVs) is the San Francisco Board of Supervisors' rejection of Mayor London Breed's revived policy for towing these rolling shelters away.

Towing of RVs was suspended during the pandemic and stayed that way after a 2023 California Court of Appeals decision banning the City from towing RVs if they accrue too many parking tickets.

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed that decision when they ruled in City of Grants Pass v. Johnson that local governments can enforce criminal penalties for public camping or sleeping, even when there is limited shelter space.

Homeless advocates appealed the SF Municipal Transportation Agency's (SFMTA) new directive to the SF Board of Supervisors, which upheld the appeal and stopped the practice with a 7-3 vote, with supervisors Joel Engardio, Matt Dorsey and Raphael Mandelman voting against the appellants.

In the Richmond District, the homeless in RVs mostly line up alongside Golden Gate Park on Fulton Street or around Geary Boulevard.

In the Sunset, homeless people in RVs have been an ongoing issue along the Lower Great Highway from Lincoln Way to Sloat Boulevard.

A Dec. 10, 2024, meeting where the appeal was heard defined the unique issues of dealing with people housed in vehicles.

"According to the 2024

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Hunt and Gather a Hub for Local Talent

Local artists (L-R) Micky Healy, Laine Wiesemann, DeeDee Hunt, Nate Tan, Andy Forrest and Roy Tahtinen kick off another season at Hunt & Gather Gallery at 1108 Irving St. in the Inner Sunset. Hunt and Gather Gallery was packed with visitors the evening of Dec. 7 for the Inner Sunset Holiday Lights Stroll and is a popular stop during Inner Sunset Art Walk events held throughout the year. Learn more at innersunsetmerchants.org and huntandgathersf.com. *Courtesy photo.*

Supervisor Engardio May Face Recall Over Great Highway Closure

By Megan Robertson

Following the passing of Proposition K, a controversial ballot measure which now will turn the Upper Great Highway into a full-time city park, a group of westside residents are beginning their attempt to recall District 4 Supervisor Joel Engardio, who advocated for the measure to be on the ballot.

On Dec. 4, 2024, Richard Corriea and Vin Budhai submitted a formal letter of intent to recall Engardio. Budhai is the founder of Open the Great Highway and a resident of Engardio's home district. Corriea is a longtime Richmond District resident, as well as the former president of the Planning Association for the Richmond and prior captain of the San Francisco Police Department's Richmond Station.

Corriea and Budhai collected 80 signatures from District 4 residents, which are included in the Dec. 4 letter. Per the San Francisco Department of Election's requirements, Engardio filed a formal response to the intent. Corriea and Budhai are now in the process of further signature collection, with the hopes of a special election in 2025, before Engardio's term is up in early 2027.

Engardio won the seat in 2022 with 50.7% of the vote, narrowly beating incumbent

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Henri Matisse's 'Jazz Unbound' Prints on Display at de Young

By Noma Faingold

Originally, the very limited edition of artist Henri Matisse's 1947 book of prints was going to be called, "Circus," because the inspiration for several motifs concerned performing artists and balancing acts. However, during the two-year period of creating 20 color stencil prints (pochoirs), the title changed to "Jazz," at the suggestion of Greek art publisher Tériade.

Matisse (1869–1954) embraced the new title because he saw the connection between visual art and musical improvisation.

"These images, with their lively and violent tones, derive from crystallizations of memories of circuses, folktales and voyages," Matisse explained in the hand-written accompanying text.

The Clown (Le clown)," 1947. Image by Henri Matisse (1869-1954), courtesy of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Museum purchase, gift of Margaret and William R. Hearst III. © 2024 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. *Photograph by Randy Dodson.*

In early 2024, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco acquired a rare, pristine unbound copy of "Jazz" and will be showing off the then-radically illustrated book in an exhibition called "Matisse Jazz Unbound," at the de Young Museum from Jan. 25 through July 6.

"The acquisition is a really big deal. It's a luxury book," FAMSF Curator of Prints and Drawings Natalia Lauricella said. "It was a top priority. 'Jazz' is considered the pinnacle of Matisse's graphic art."

The exhibit consists of the 20 unbound, framed works, which Lauricella refers to as "plates," lining the walls of a main-floor gallery, along with four other bound Matisse books from the museum's collection, to be displayed in vitrines.

When Matisse began the project in 1943 at age 74, he was not well. He underwent risky surgery in 1941 after being diagnosed with abdominal cancer. Post-surgery, he was grateful to be alive, but he was confined to his bed and a wheelchair until his death at 84. In spite of his physical limitations and the German occupation of France (where he lived), he produced some of

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RV Housing Dilemma

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point-in-time count, there are over 1,400 people in San Francisco living in their vehicles. Ninety percent of families experiencing unsheltered homelessness live in their vehicles," said Gabriel Medina, executive director for La Raza Community Resource Center, when he addressed the Board on behalf of the appellants. "With the high rents in San Francisco and job losses during the pandemic, many turn to RVs as their only option. RV parks are common in other parts of the state, but San Francisco doesn't really have this as a sustainable option. So, people end up in an RV on the street."

Medina said the SFMTA was asking families to trade in their RVs for shelter space.

"The Buena Vista-Horace Mann Stay-over Program is one of the only readily available shelters for families but they have to turn families away. Families have to sleep on the floor of the gym but the shelter closes at 7 a.m. and doesn't reopen until 7 p.m."

"We're not just discussing towing a vehicle; we are discussing towing a home with all of its contents, including critical documentation," said Erica Wang during public comment. "Once we take away the last of their wealth, the ability to retrieve it becomes very difficult, resulting in more families being forced to live on the streets."

"You are just moving the mess around; the mess that you created," said Jamie Lang of the Homeless Prenatal Program. "And every day that goes by, HSH (Homelessness and Supportive Housing) is over here getting strategic on how they lower the numbers of folks on the shelter wait list, like changing who is eligible and quietly just taking people off the wait list for no reason at all.

"These punitive measures are not a solution. Housing is a solution," Lang said.

"This policy is hanging us out to dry," said Hope Kramer, director of strategic initiatives at Compass Family Services. "We have no shelter beds left. We have no housing vouchers left. It is a lie that the Safer Families Plan funds enough subsidies to meet this need.

"To force families from fragile stability into situations of unsheltered homelessness while failing to add money to the shelter system is lazy policy making," she said. "It is falling into the trap of punishing poverty that drains our limited resources and quietly and bureaucratically ruins the lives of predominantly poor, BIPOC mothers. You know this punishment will not work. Jeffrey Tumlin knows this will not work."

It turns out that the outgoing MTA Director Tumlin does know about being homeless.

As one advocate pointed out, it was at an SFMTA Board of Directors meeting on March 3, 2020, that Tumlin spoke about his arrival in San Francisco.

"When I first moved to San Francisco, I lived in my car," Tumlin said. "Living in my car meant I had a place to keep my stuff dry and to sleep safely.

"And washing up at the gas station, I could make myself presentable, such that it was possible for me to convince a landlord into renting me an apartment even though I was unemployed," he said. "That in turn allowed me to have temp work. If my car had been towed during those weeks of living in my car, I probably wouldn't be here today."

RVs parked on 19th Avenue between Stonestown and SFSU. This is one of the places where those who are left from Winston Drive ended up parking. *Photograph by Thomas K. Pendergast.*

River Rudolph of the Westside Tenants Association said those hoping that bans like this will drive homeless people out of San Francisco will be disappointed.

"This is not going to cause them to leave San Francisco," Rudolph said. "They have connections here. They have jobs here. They have resources here. They have family here. They are not going to leave San Francisco."

Yet Viktoriya Wise, the SFMTA's Streets Division director, told the board there really is not much of a choice but to allow towing RVs as an option. They had been restricting more and more RV parking, but then they stopped when the pandemic hit.

"The city streets simply do not contain the facilities we need to manage trash and human waste that's generated, along with long-term vehicular habitation," Wise said. "Until there is a clear indication of meaningful enforcement, such as having your vehicle towed, people don't always want to accept shelter and our other services."

She calls the new policy "a tool of last resort."

One of the three supervisors voting against the appeal was District 8 Supervisor Raphael Mandelman, who offered a different perspective.

He called some of the advice given by advocates as a "not unreasonable position," but with a caveat.

"We should all be in this together," Mandelman said. "If we don't have shelters for folks, we should allow folks to find shelter when they can where they can, on the street if they must, on sidewalks if they must, in public plazas and parks if they must. It is not an insane position. It is a humane position. It is not the position of the majority of San Franciscans or anything close.

"And I, as an elected representative in a democracy, believe that I need to be responsive to the reasonable demands of my constituents, that they be able to use their public spaces, that they not be privatized in a completely unregulated way, turned over to uses that are damaging and destructive, not always but sometimes and cause significant challenges not for the most affluent communities in San Francisco because they don't have encampments in their midst; they don't have RVs," he said.

Meanwhile in District 7, Supervisor Myrna Melgar is already experienced in dealing with vehicles along Winston Drive, which after three years of effort resulted in housing for 52 families, she claims.

"It was not a smooth exercise," Melgar said. "Had it not been for the persistence of people on my staff and myself in weekly meetings with HSH and SFMTA, I don't think we would have been as successful. In defense of the SFMTA, they are charged with streets, with keeping the public right of way. They are not the housing department nor the homeless department.

"So, this is where, I think, we have failed as a city. We don't have a good system for families living in RVs to get into housing they can afford, whether that is supportive or not.

"We own a lot of land in this city, between the port, the airport, PUC (San Francisco Public Utilities Commission) and yet we have not been able to pull that off, I think because we have charged the wrong department. It's not the SFMTA's problem to solve nor is it HSH because that's not quite what they do," Melgar said.

"We are going to have a new administration that I hope tackles the structural issues and lack of capacity within our city family to address this issue. I hope that they do," she said.

"I don't see a way to figure this out without parking restrictions. Part of the problem is that we have pushed folks living in vehicles into certain areas of our city and they tend to be in the Bayview, the Excelsior and the areas where working people live," Melgar added. "We have caused this problem. But I think that you don't do the punitive measures first. I think you provide the support that people need. Eventually, I will support the parking restrictions when we have a system to deal with it, which I don't think we have today."

Press Release

SF Environment Department

Tree Recycling Information

For more than 30 years, San Francisco's Christmas trees have been collected and recycled in a safe and environmentally friendly way.

It's time to turn the page on 2024 and prepare to say goodbye to our Christmas trees.

With the beginning of the new year, a long-practiced holiday tradition of sustainable tree recycling returns to San Francisco. City officials from the San Francisco Environment Department (SFE) and San Francisco Public Works remind residents that Recology will collect their unadorned Christmas trees from Jan. 2 to Jan. 17. Recology will chip and grind the trees, and the recycled trees will be used in the compost process.

"Christmas trees are the gift that keeps on giving," said Director of the San Francisco Environment Department Tyrone Jue. "They sequester carbon as they grow, bring warmth and joy into our homes during the holidays, and when we tree-cycle them, we help to restore soil health and support natural landscapes."

Recycling your Christmas tree is easy. Between Jan. 2 and 17, place your tree next to your curbside collection bins the night before your scheduled collection day. Please position your tree so it can be easily spotted by the Recology crew exclusively collecting trees. It is very important to remove all decorations, tinsel, nails, stands and lights – anything that had been added to the natural tree. Your tree must be as bare, empty and natural as the day you purchased it! That way, there will be no contaminants in the compost.

If your tree measures more than six feet tall, please cut it in half. Trees should not be placed in a plastic bag. Trees will be collected curbside by a separate truck on your regularly scheduled collection day. Natural wreaths can be collected as well, but all metal wires or frames must be removed.

The collected Christmas trees will be transported to Recology's Jepson Prairie Organics composting facility, near Vacaville. Recology workers will feed the trees into a large grinder. The smallest pieces of ground trees will be combined with other compostable material, such as food scraps, sticks and leaves, and composted. Woody pieces of ground-up Christmas trees will become part of the biofilter system at the composting facility.

"Christmas trees are an age-old tradition that symbolize joy, but once the trees come down after the holiday season, they should be disposed of properly, so they don't become a sidewalk hazard," said Public Works Director Carla Short. "The tree-cycle program helps keep our neighborhoods clean and safe. It keeps the trees out of the landfill by fully utilizing them in the composting process."

"We collect nearly 300 tons of Christmas trees in San Francisco.

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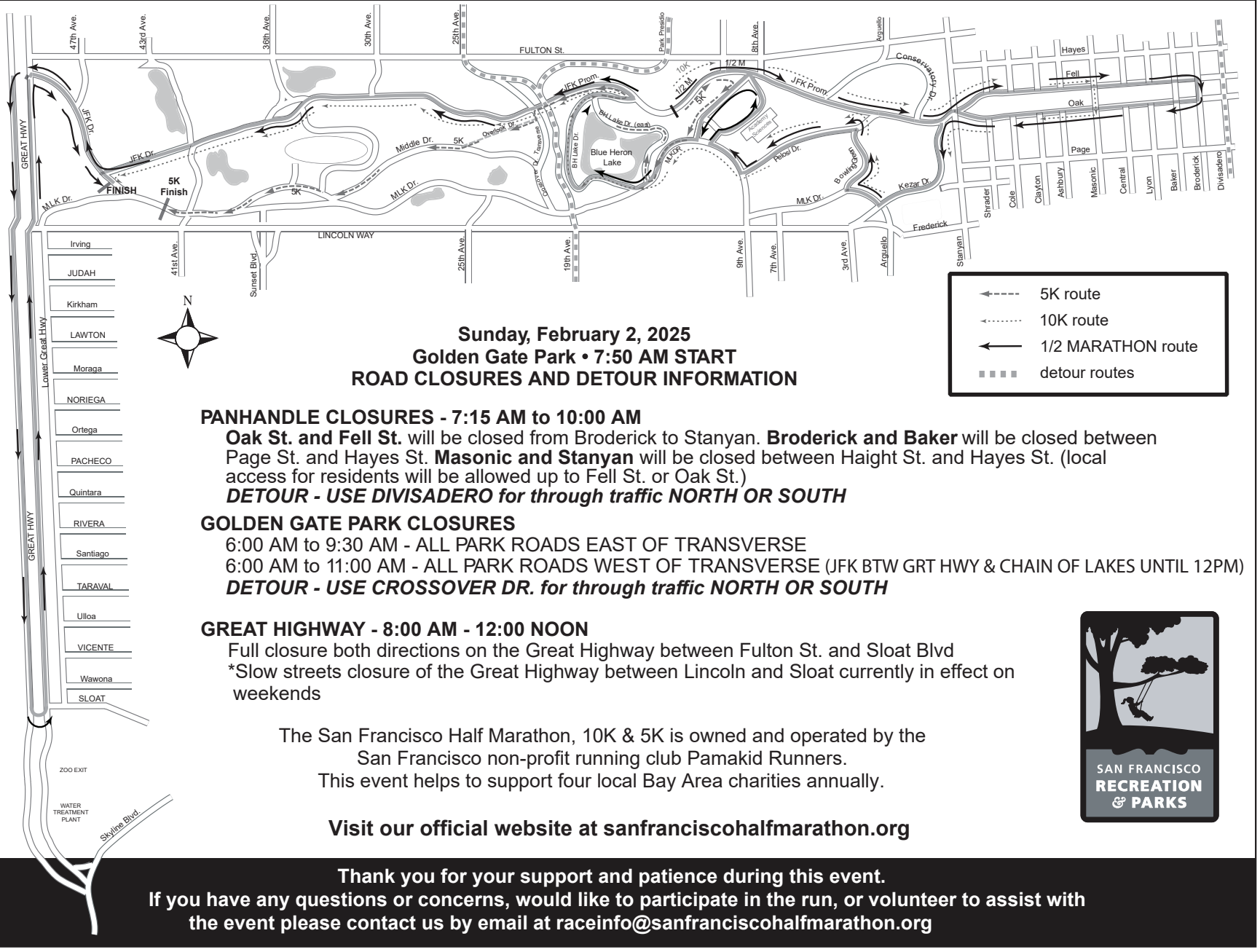

Sunday, February 2, 2025
Golden Gate Park • 7:50 AM START
ROAD CLOSURES AND DETOUR INFORMATION

PANHANDLE CLOSURES - 7:15 AM to 10:00 AM

Oak St. and Fell St. will be closed from Broderick to Stanyan. **Broderick and Baker** will be closed between Page St. and Hayes St. **Masonic and Stanyan** will be closed between Haight St. and Hayes St. (local access for residents will be allowed up to Fell St. or Oak St.)

DETOUR - USE DIVISADERO for through traffic NORTH OR SOUTH

GOLDEN GATE PARK CLOSURES

6:00 AM to 9:30 AM - ALL PARK ROADS EAST OF TRANSVERSE
6:00 AM to 11:00 AM - ALL PARK ROADS WEST OF TRANSVERSE (JFK BTW GRT HWY & CHAIN OF LAKES UNTIL 12PM)

DETOUR - USE CROSSOVER DR. for through traffic NORTH OR SOUTH

GREAT HIGHWAY - 8:00 AM - 12:00 NOON

Full closure both directions on the Great Highway between Fulton St. and Sloat Blvd
*Slow streets closure of the Great Highway between Lincoln and Sloat currently in effect on weekends

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Visit our official website at sanfranciscohalfmarathon.org

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Thank you for your support and patience during this event.
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Real Estate

John M. Lee

2024 Sunset R.E. Review

The single-family median home prices in the Sunset District stabilized and rose after two years of decline, with median prices increasing by 3.9% and the number of sales by 11.9% in 2024. Prices were pretty stable throughout the year as the Feds kept the interest rates steady, except for two quarter-point decreases later in the year. The Sunset Home Sales Comparison Table shows the results in 2024 as compared with prior years broken up by quarters.

The data were gathered from the San Francisco Association of Realtors' Multiple Listing Service and consist of single-family home sales in the Sunset, Parkside and Golden Gate Heights areas.

In 2024, there were 385 sales versus 344 for 2023 and 460 for 2022, an increase of 11.9% year over year and a decrease of 16.3% over 2022. The median sales price increased 3.9% to $1.56 million from 2023 to 2024, while it went down 11.6% from 2022 to 2023. The amount of marketing time to sell a home is about 13-14 days for 2022, 2023 and 2024, indicating good demand for the Sunset.

If you analyze the attached chart, it shows that the prices went up in the second and fourth quarters, coinciding with our annual sales cycle. The mortgage rates hovered between 6.25% to 7% all year. Since I started collecting data 25 years ago, this is amongst the lowest number of sales in the Sunset District following last year's all-time low. We had nowhere to go but up.

In 2024, the major stock indexes did well, gaining about 14-33% at the writing of this article, with some turbulence toward the end of the year due to inflation, and the Feds guidance that there might only be two small interest rate decreases in 2025. The consumer confidence index is holding steady. Our unemployment rate is hovering at 3% in San Francisco which represents pretty much full employment. The 30-year mortgage interest rate has hovered in the 6-7% range and hopes to come down a little more in 2025. Inflation is in the targeted 3% range.

The economy appears to be in a holding pattern waiting to see what happens during the next Trump administration. With Republicans in control, the economy tends to do well historically. But remember that real estate is a lagging economic indicator, meaning that it will follow the economy up, usually by about 6-12 months.

So even though sales are still low, prices have stabilized and went up a little in 2024, perhaps signaling a bottom. Sellers are finally realizing that prices are lower and that interest rates really affect how buyers look at the market. Those who need to sell are making the price adjustments and selling. However, many owners are making the decision to wait until the market gets better before putting properties on the market, thus limiting our listing inventory and sales. Buyers are getting accustomed to this interest rate range and making buying decisions based on it.

Locally, the demand in San Francisco and the Sunset District will continue to be OK. It is a desirable place to live, and prices have dropped which makes it more affordable. A somewhat unknown is how much the impending closure of the Upper Great Highway will have on prices in the Outer Sunset as that neighborhood will be more impacted with more traffic and more people going out there.

My prediction for 2025 is that we will continue to have a slow real estate market, but better than 2024. It will be a very balanced market between buyers and sellers. Inventory will still be pretty tight as owners who do not have to sell will continue to hold onto their properties until the market gets better.

Therefore, if you are contemplating buying into the real estate market, there will be opportunities. If you are planning on selling, keep in mind that the market is slow but improving, but if priced and marketed correctly, you should still get a pretty good price. If you want to reposition your real estate portfolio, this is an excellent time to do it and take advantage of less competition as the investment market is still very sluggish. Wishing you all a Happy New Year and all the best in 2025!

John M. Lee is a broker with Compass specializing in the Richmond and Sunset districts. If you have any real estate questions, call him at 415-465-0505 or email johnlee@isellsf.com. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

SUNSET HOME SALES COMPARISON
(By Quarter)

2022

# of Sales	Average Price	Median Price	Days on Market
97	1,885,623	1,800,000	11
153	1,967,769	1,900,000	12
123	1,651,598	1,500,000	14
87	1,620,391	1,505,000	15
460	**1,800,206**	**1,700,000**	**13**
*-10.7%**	*-1.9%**	*-0.3%**	*18.2%**

* Percent change from previous year.

2023

# of Sales	Average Price	Median Price	Days on Market
61	1,688,015	1,528,000	15
102	1,629,322	1,505,000	12
100	1,600,330	1,501,550	14
81	1,506,600	1,482,000	16
344	**1,609,233**	**1,502,000**	**14**
*-25.2%**	*-10.6%**	*-11.6%**	*7.7%**

2024

# of Sales	Average Price	Median Price	Days on Market
64	1,544,186	1,512,500	13
121	1,769,293	1,625,000	12
99	1,582,208	1,505,000	13
101	1,631,004	1,550,000	14
385	**1,647,487**	**1,560,000**	**14**
11.9%	*2.4%*	*3.9%*	*0%*

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Lunar New Year

Year of the Serpent

February 8

Now in its 25th year, our annual event begins with preconcert lobby festivities and entertainment. The concert, conducted by Francesco Lecce-Chong and featuring cellist Amos Yang and pipa player Wu Man, draws upon a wide range of Asian traditions to commemorate the holiday.

Continue the festivities after the concert by purchasing a ticket to the dramatic and glamorous banquet. Elevated experiences are available. Call **415.503.5351** for more details.

This concert is presented in partnership with

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The commissioning of Shuying Li's new work is supported by **the Ralph I. Dorfman Commissioning Fund**.

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James Gaffigan & Ray Chen
Jan 9–11

***Carmina burana* & Adams' Piano Concerto**
Jan 16, 18–19

Also sprach Zarathustra
Jan 24–25

Blomstedt Conducts Schubert & Brahms
Jan 30–Feb 1

Järvi Conducts Mahler 7
Feb 6–9

Commentary

Quentin L. Kopp

In One Year and Out the Other

It's a New Year and you can count the herculean resolutions of all San Franciscans from Mayor-Elect Daniel Lurie to your humble but not always pleasing scribe. Remember that a New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other!

We could begin the school year by emphasizing ROTC and occupational trade courses to San Francisco high schools which have abandoned them. ROTC constitutes a pre-enlistment advantage for those who graduate high school and enlist in the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines or Coast Guard, all of which currently are understaffed as we confront Russia, China and other unfriendly nations.

Vocational education in this technology age represents a required learning process for high school students who don't need college with its attendant costs. Machinery and tools also are relevant to industrial and agricultural livelihoods. I recall my birthplace, Syracuse, N.Y. One of the six public high schools in a city with 210,000 residents was Vocational High School, many of whose students even went to college after graduating.

We begin 2025 with a new mayor and seven new supervisors, plus a deficit of more than $800 million looming in the 2025-2026 budget. As of July 2024, our City Hall saviors on the second floor constituting the Board of Supervisors received $170,430 annually and their four legislative assistants drew $145,236 without any civil service exam needed. For once, however, they've joined in their tax money clamor by San Mateo County's five-member Board of Supervisors which sets its own salary and is now seeking $195,782 plus benefits. As longtime readers know, until 1996, San Francisco voters, who pay the second floor City Hall intellectuals, had to approve by a majority vote any salary increase. In 1981, the salary was (and had been since 1962!) $9,324 annually. As board president, I asked Budget Analyst Harvey Rose to calculate the cost-of-living increase since 1962 and secured passage of an ordinance for voter approval to increase our salary accordingly. The voters approved the increase for the "Mighty Eleven" who serve residents, not the other way around. For our current heroes, it's "Katie, Bar The Door."

The current starting 11 are successors to those earlier stalwarts who made San Francisco a "sanctuary city," meaning our police and other civil service city employees must protect illegal immigrants (about 38,000 in number). City employees cannot report illegal aliens to federal authorities whose responsibility it is to evict such lawbreakers from the USA. They're not "undocumented" aliens, as the media takes pride in identifying them. They've broken our laws.

In some U.S. cities, illegal aliens are a favored class. Chicago gives them housing entitlements and provides apartments for them and lets them work "under the table." Guess who suffers the most – it's Chicago's black citizens. I await President-Elect Donald Trump's assurance his administration will expel America's millions of illegal invaders. Let's see if he's all talk like his predecessors. Let's see what a new mayor and seven new supervisors will do about abolishing S.F.'s "Sanctuary City" status.

Even with illegal aliens, San Francisco's population declined by about 2,000 in 2024. Gov. Gavin Newsom's vaunted home-building crusade has fallen short. As a putative 2028 presidential candidate, he's been unable to deliver on that promise. Meanwhile, Park Merced's empty apartments invite placement of homeless people. Stonestown hasn't begun building any of the 325 or so apartments for which it secured Planning Department permits nearly four years ago and the Irish Cultural Center and its proposed Sloat Boulevard neighbor with a planned 50 stories of rental housing are still "in the barn." (Those 50 stories have since been reduce to 35.) Why? It's the market and a declining number of San Francisco residents.

I have some 2025 resolutions to fulfill, including abolition of ranked-choice voting, district elections of supervisors (which little Menlo Park had crammed down residents' throats in 2017), and stopping "deputy mayors" by calling them "policy directors" at Room 200 in City Hall. Regarding district supervisorial elections, the Palo Alto Daily Post editor labels Menlo Park, "The city where democracy is dying."

In the spirit of a new year, I bring readers the wisdom of Great Britain's former prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, to wit: "The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money."

Quentin Kopp is a former San Francisco supervisor, state senator, SF Ethics Commission member, president of the California High Speed Rail Authority governing board and retired Superior Court judge.

Engardio Recall

Continued from page 1

Gordon Mar. He entered a heightened political landscape on the city's westside surrounding the stretch of the Upper Great Highway between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard. The roadway was closed to traffic completely in 2020 to provide residents a safe recreation area during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, the City landed on an agreement, to last until the end of 2025, which would close this stretch of the highway to most vehicle traffic on weekends.

This issue was made even more complicated when the SF Board of Supervisors unanimously voted in May 2024 to close the portion of the Great Highway south of Sloat Boulevard due to coastal erosion. While the highway no longer serves as a 100% direct route to Daly City for commuters, more than 14,000 drivers use the stretch from Lincoln to Sloat each day.

Budhai said the thought of a recall did not come up until Engardio, along with four other supervisors, introduced Proposition K to the ballot last summer. The stated justifications for the recall are that Engardio should have done more outreach to constituents before putting the proposition on the ballot and that Engardio should never have put it on the ballot.

Outside of this issue, Budhai admitted Engardio has had many accomplishments for the district.

"The night markets, fixing potholes and things like that. These are all wonderful things. Don't get me wrong," Budhai said. "But they're not the things that the community needs or relies on a daily basis. Drivers, commuters, they need to get back and forth from work to pick up and drop off their kids, and to get to hospital appointments.

"We feel that, as a leader of the community, you should have done some more outreach to your constituents, to your voters, to see how they would think or how they feel about you moving forward by putting this on the ballot for the entire City to vote on."

Proposition K passed with only an approximate 30-40% support rate in the westside districts.

In an email statement, Engardio wrote, "I'm humbled by the views of residents who opposed Prop K."

District 4 Supervisor Joel Engardio may face a recall election over his efforts to close the Upper Great Highway to private vehicles. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

Engardio responded to the accusation that he did not do enough outreach to voters.

"Many said they didn't feel heard in the process, and I take this feedback to heart," he said. "I'm hearing loud and clear that we need safer residential streets and better traffic flow. These are valid concerns, which I share. That's why I'm working with Mayor-elect Lurie to ensure key traffic improvements are made before implementing the Prop. K road closure."

Traffic improvements by the city are planned for the coming months.

Budhai claims that part of Engardio's initial election victory was due to his stance on keeping the Upper Great Highway compromise in place.

"It's an act of betrayal against all of the voters and his constituents," Budhai said. "A lot of folks were happy with the compromise and just said it is what it is. Let it be."

Engardio disputed this claim via email.

"I've always talked about the pending closure of the Great Highway south of Sloat due to coastal erosion and how it would create the opportunity for a permanent oceanside park. This language has been on my website and platform since my campaign in 2022."

Following the Board of Supervisors' May vote to close the southern end of Great Highway, Engardio addressed the fate of the Upper Great Highway running along the edge of the Sunset District.

"Clarity was needed about what to do with the middle section of the road. There were only two ways to resolve this issue: Either by the voters directly or by the 11 members of the Board of Supervisors," he said. "Either way, residents or supervisors on the east side would have a say. Rather than 11 supervisors deciding the future of our collective coast, a vote at the ballot box gave everyone a say. After all, the coast belongs to everyone."

Engardio is in the process of releasing a "Stop the Engardio Recall" campaign and website.

"Not everyone agrees, however, that my role in Prop. K is a recallable offense," he stated. "I was one of five supervisors to put Prop. K to a democratic vote of the people. Voters have a democratic right to recall elected leaders, of course. But recalls should be reserved for elected officials who commit the most egregious offenses or who are unable or unwilling to fulfill the duties of their office. No matter the result, this recall will not change the outcome or implementation of Prop. K."

"We just need someone that really truly represents all of the district and not just a small minor group that he's advocating for right now. Ideally, we want to replace Joel Engardio with a supervisor that represents everyone," Budhai said.

Richard Corriea (right) draws media attention as he turns a petition signed by 80 Sunset District residents over to the SF Department of Elections on Dec. 3, 2024, to start the recall process against District 4 Supervisor Joel Engardio. *Photo by Paul Kozakiewicz.*

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Family Meal

Sean Rinn

Devil's Teeth

Hilary Passman is the owner of Devil's Teeth Baking Company, a San Francisco staple that has thrived since opening in 2011. But it was not always so easy for her.

Before owning Devil's Teeth, Passman was an attorney on the East Coast who recognized her career was eating up valuable quality time with her kids.

"I was an attorney, I worked downtown and I had too many kids," Passman joked. OK, not too many, but I didn't get to see them, so I needed a reason to stop being an attorney and start spending more time with my kids."

Passman followed her heart. She quit being an attorney and pursued baking by selling wedding cakes on Craigslist and selling pastries wholesale to cafes when she moved to San Francisco in 1996.

"That was kind of the intermediate step for me, but that was me having my kids all day and staying up all night making brownies and lemon bars, so it was more of an impetus to open a real store where people could actually help me," she said.

Passman cherished the time she was able to spend with her kids and pursued her passion at night, but she knew she did not want baking to be a side hustle forever. When thinking about how she could open her own bakery, memories of her upbringing on the East Coast gave her a spark.

"I went to high school on the East Coast, and there were breakfast sandwiches every 10 steps; every corner store had one," Passman said. "I thought it was interesting that there wasn't a really delicious and complete breakfast sandwich to go in the Sunset.

One of three Devil's Teeth Baking Company locations is in the Outer Sunset at 3876 Noriega St. *Photo by Sean Rinn.*

There are a lot of different restaurants, but not that specific thing. So yeah, I'll just make it myself."

The breakfast sandwich was the catalyst for opening the first Devil's Teeth on Noriega Street almost 14 years ago. It took months for Passman to perfect the sandwich by tinkering with buttermilk biscuit recipes, since she believed breakfast sandwiches work better on a biscuit rather than a bagel, and cooking eggs in every way imaginable to find the perfect texture and fluffiness that would complement the biscuit.

Since Passman decided to be the change she wanted in the Sunset, her breakfast sandwich exploded in popularity to the extent where it requires the Devil's Teeth staff to make hundreds a day. On weekends, lines will extend down the street as customers eagerly await the opportunity to pick up their breakfast sandwich.

"On the weekend, we can sell 600 a day. Yeah, that's a lot of eggs," said Passman.

A notable trait that has made Devil's Teeth successful enough to expand multiple locations – including one in the Richmond District and one in the Embarcadero – is the culture Passman has built for her staff encouraging creativity and pulling from family roots.

"That's kind of what it's all about, right?" Passman said.

A recent example of allowing others in the kitchen to be inspired by their roots is the Ube blondie bar found at the Balboa location, coming from a Filipino baker whose grandmother used to make Ube cake.

"That is my kids' favorite thing on the menu right now," Passman said. "I'm grateful that the bakers know that they have the space to make what they want. I'm grateful that people are sharing what they like."

It does not end there. The coffee cake recipe came from one of the baker's mothers. Even with the signature breakfast sandwich, Passman originally used her grandmother's recipe for the biscuit, but changed it when one of her first bakers brought in a family recipe for a biscuit that she acknowledged was better. It has not changed since.

While Devil's Teeth's foundation was built from a strong sense of family values, the bakery has grown roots that built a home for Passman and her family.

"I mean, every neighborhood has its own different flavor and feel, and for me it's the Sunset. That's just home. I moved here in 1996 and I'm not leaving."

Passman has embraced San Francisco with love. It is how she built her business, the culture she created for her staff and how she immersed herself in the community. She has become a true San Franciscan.

"My kids all went to public schools in the Richmond, and I am super invested in San Francisco and especially out near the beach. That's just where I want to be," she said. "I love the fog, I love the sun, I love the community. I love the fact that it's so diverse. I love that we have locals and tourists, and yet I cannot walk down the street without saying 'hi' to 12 people. It's my favorite city. It's an amazing city."

In the Balboa Street location, Passman showcases art from local artists like Karii Rurup-Coleman who has displayed her ethereal multi-media paintings at Devil's Teeth in the past. Passman has truly embraced the spirit of San Francisco carving out a corner for her family and being an active member of the community.

It's fitting that the bakery's name also pays tribute to San Francisco. Devil's Teeth was a nickname sailors gave the Farallon Islands during the Gold Rush due to its resemblance of shark teeth and its reputation for being a breeding ground for sharks.

Passman also admitted that she sees double meaning in the name, comparing Devil's Teeth to that of a sweet tooth.

Devil's Teeth Baking Company is located at 3876 Noriega St., 3619 Balboa St. and 1 Embarcadero Center. Learn more at devilsteethbakingcompany.com.

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

As a resident of the Sunset District, I'm staunchly opposed to the recall of our District Supervisor Joel Engardio, who is one of the rare elected officials who directly and positively impacts community life. The recall threatens to undo all the great work he has done for our neighborhoods, and I am proud to stand with Joel.

While I supported Proposition K, I recognize that many of my neighbors did not share my view. But disagreement on a single policy is not grounds for a recall. Recalls should be reserved for serious misconduct or fundamental failure to perform official duties.

The school board and district attorney recalls met that bar for me. Unlike the attempted recall of Engardio, their recalls went beyond simple policy disagreements. They were fundamentally about those elected officials' ability to get the job done. They were asleep at the wheel. Joel Engardio could not be more different.

His bona fides speak for themselves.

He organized the first-ever night markets in the Sunset that I attended with my family. He started the Sunset Community Band, giving many residents the chance to dust off their instruments for the first time since high school and many more the joy of hearing them play. When I raised concern about a dangerous intersection near my house, his staff responded immediately, demonstrating a commitment to constituent service.

And his work is not finished. Not by a long shot.

I was born in San Francisco in 1985, when a double-decker freeway ran through the Embarcadero. I remember watching the light fixtures swaying on my ceiling as a 4 year old during the 1989 earthquake that brought that freeway to the ground. I'm so grateful to those who fought for the area to be rebuilt as a pedestrian-friendly waterfront recreation area. It was a contentious battle, but now no one can imagine the City without it.

Now that I'm raising my own kids in this city, I think a lot about how to make things better for them. I want my kids to feel safe, connected and inspired by city life. I've considered leaving San Francisco many times because I often don't feel this way myself. But at this point, I'm committed to working alongside city leaders like Joel who are trying in good faith to improve our community for everyone.

Recalls should not become a tool for resolving political disagreements. They are a serious measure that should be used sparingly and only for legitimate, profound breaches of public trust. Joel has demonstrated integrity, responsiveness and a genuine commitment to our district. I support him 100% and urge my fellow residents to reject this misguided recall attempt.

Lindsay Meisel

Editor:

The deployment of robocars in San Francisco reveals a troubling trend of technological "innovation" that prioritizes corporate profits over community well-being. While proponents claim autonomous vehicles will improve street safety, the reality is far more complex and problematic.

Waymo and similar companies have already deepened urban inequality. These robocars create more problems than they solve, causing significant issues for San Francisco's transportation ecosystem. Every day, over 600 robocars aimlessly prowl the City's streets, competing with thousands of ride-share vehicles and creating unprecedented congestion.

The most glaring issue is how these autonomous vehicles fundamentally disrupt urban mobility. Unlike traditional transportation, robocars spend hours wandering streets between passengers, dramatically increasing vehicle miles traveled without improving transportation efficiency. What used to be a 10-minute cross-town drive now takes 40 minutes, all because of these "four-wheel zombies" constantly blocking traffic.

Economic inequities are stark. Waymo is expensive and primarily accessible to affluent residents, effectively creating a two-tier transportation system. Requiring smartphone apps for access further marginalizes lower-income individuals, the elderly, and those uncomfortable with digital technology. Traditional taxi services have been nearly eliminated, removing more accessible transportation options.

The economic impact extends beyond convenience. Waymo and similar technologies actively destroy jobs without providing corresponding economic benefits. The revenue generated is funneled directly back to tech companies, leaving little economic advantage for the local community. These robocars contribute nothing to San Francisco's vibrant urban character and instead threaten to transform the city into a sterile, automated landscape.

Safety claims are equally dubious. Robocars' cautious programming actually creates more potential for accidents by disrupting normal traffic flow. By strictly adhering to speed limits and moving unpredictably, they frustrate human drivers and create dangerous bottlenecks. Police, fire and emergency vehicles are also significantly impeded.

Privacy concerns are another critical issue. These vehicles constantly gather data about passengers' movements, with no compensation or consent. The potential for data misuse by corporations, advertisers, or potentially government entities is substantial.

The broader context is a tech industry prioritizing profit over societal welfare. Waymo represents a solution searching for a problem, funded by venture capitalists eager to recoup investments in a fundamentally unnecessary technology. No city needs autonomous passenger cars – what we truly need are better public transit options like improved buses, trains and subways.

In conclusion, the deployment of robocars isn't an inevitable technological progression but a deliberate

Continued on page 10

'Then and Now': Lincoln Way at 41st Avenue

Left: This is the view looking west on Lincoln Way at 41st Avenue on March 8, 1912. A train waiting station and Golden Gate Park are on the right. *Photo courtesy of a private collector/Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.* Right: The view on New Year's Day 2025 shows a fully mature group of trees in Golden Gate Park and a seemingly endless stream of cars on Lincoln Way. Houses and aprtments now line the south side of Lincoln. Chain of Lakes Drive on the right is an entrance into the park and is part of the City's 49-Mile Scenic Drive. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CAR FOR SALE

2008 VW Beetle for sale. Like-new. Great body, white interior, good black paint, brand new tires from Costco, doesn't smoke or burn oil, engine runs great, $4,200. Clean title, clean car in SF. 805-455-9520.

COMMENTARIES AND LETTERS

From the editor: All commentaries we publish are the opinions of the writers and should not be considered our editorial stance on issues. We strive to remain neutral and offer a balance of viewpoints. We invite readers who wish to express their opinions to send a letter to the editor to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Word limit for the newspaper is 350, for the website, 500. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

FELTON TECH SQUAD

Felton's Tech Squad provides free basic tech support for older adults and people with disabilities. Ask questions regarding how to navigate your smartphone, tablet or laptop.
Friday, Jan. 24, 1:30-3 p.m. at the Ortega Library (3223 Ortega St.). Drop-in for one-on-one session in English. We are also seeking volunteers who speak English and/or Cantonese. For more information, call 415-474-1558 or email techsquad@felton.org.

FREE WALKING GROUP FOR SENIORS

Join the friendly San Francisco 55+ Neighborhood Walks. These free walks are leisurely, not vigorous, accommodating seniors with various walking abilities. To sign up, go to meetup.com/sf-55-neighborhood-walking-groups/. You can see who else is walking. You are also welcome if you just show up in person. The walks meet weekly, except when it rains and sometimes on holidays – check the Meetup link for the latest updates. The walks vary from one hour to two hours and you can leave at any time.

- Tuesday walks start at noon at Angelina's Cafe, 6000 California St., at 22nd Avenue in the Richmond District and goes to Lands End and back.
- Friday walks start at 10 a.m. in front of the Forest Hill Club House at 391 Magellan St. and tours that beautiful neighborhood.
- Sunday walks start at 1 p.m. at Java Beach by the Zoo at 2650 Sloat Blvd. in the Outer Sunset and goes along the Upper Great Highway from Sloat Boulevard to Judah Street and back. Dogs are allowed at the Ocean Beach walk.

Every walk is located where there is a public bathroom either at the starting place or on the route.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy January birthday to Rachel Eileen Abbott, Lois Anderson, Kyle Buckley, Jailene Calfayan, Haley Craig, Mark Craig, Chiara Di Martino, Alex and Alice Doliner, Ilze Earner, Benjamin Johnson, Caroline King, Kyle Kisor, Gabrielle Macapinlac, Alexander Mullaney, Phyllis Nabhan, Kiran Nagaraja, Olivia Neel, Renata Ruby Rhodes, Caley Rittman, Sarah Roberts, Natalie Rodier, Linda Shore, Bonnie Sill, Nelly Soncuya, Adriana Sosa, Cesar Tesen, Shirley Yip and Jeremy Wong. *To add a name to the monthly birthday list, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Free.*

LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

The San Francisco Long-Term Care Ombudsman program offers free, confidential support to address issues raised by residents in long-term care facilities and free training opportunities for those interested in becoming volunteer ombudsmen. For details on training or accessing support, call 415-751-9788 or email ombudsman@felton.org.

OUTER SUNSET FARMERS MARKET AND MERCANTILE

Join us every Sunday at the Outer Sunset Farmers Market and Mercantile where you can find fresh produce from local farmers and ranchers, enjoy delicious dishes from Outer Sunset eateries and discover unique finds from local makers and artisans. Every Sunday, find a revolving series of live performers, engaging activities and exhibitions at the ArtShip and fun zone! Our farmers market accepts WIC, EBT and Market Match. 37th Avenue at Ortega Street, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Go to sunsetmercantilesf.com or call 415-465-2475 for more details.

"PHOTOS OF THE MONTH" ONLINE GALLERY

Photographers are invited to submit three of their best photos for consideration to be published in the "Photos of the Month" gallery on RichmondSunsetNews.com. The website averages 20,000 views per month. Please submit photos as jpegs on the 15th of each month. For more information, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com or call 415-706-6428.

REFUSE REFUSE CLEANUPS

Monday, Jan. 6, 8-9 a.m., Outer Sunset Morning Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/604552/.
Wednesday, Jan. 8, 4-5 p.m., Inner Sunset Happy Hour Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/581814/.
Saturday, Jan. 25, 10 a.m.-noon, Inner Sunset Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/464169/.

SECONDHAND SATURDAYS

Come check out Secondhand Saturdays and celebrate all things vintage, antique and secondhand. Presented by Sunset Mercantile every third Saturday of the month at Ortega Street and 37th Avenue, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Shop local from more than 50 vintage vendors, makers and artisans that are some of the Bay Area's best. Enjoy live music, family-friendly activities, food trucks, rotating monthly features and more! Visit sunsetmercantilesf.com/secondhand/ for more information.

STAMP COLLECTOR AND STAMP COLLECTIONS

Stamp collector is buying stamps and stamp collections. I am buying "older stamps" from the 1800s to 1930. American Philatelic Society member since 1986. Pictures are appreciated. Call or text message 415-533-0761.

SUNSET MERCANTILE'S EMPORIUM

Sunset Mercantile's first brick and mortar location is an incubating platform for local merchants and makers. Located in the heart of the Inner Sunset, Sunset Mercantile's Emporium is an extension of its popular outdoor events. It serves as a platform for small vendors and makers to showcase and sell their unique, often handmade, products. You can find an array of items, from an in-store plant shop, to handmade bags, vintage fashion, to grab-and-go artisanal snacks. The store also hosts workshops and seasonal events for the community such as the Inner Sunset Art Walk, Holiday Light Stroll and Noise Pop's Summer of Music. The Emporium would like to extend an invitation to local merchants and makers to be a part of this special new retail space. This is an opportunity for vendors to create their own mini shop within the store. For more information about Emporium and how to apply, visit sunsetmercantilesf.com/emporium/.

THANK YOU!

Sincere thanks to the Sunset Beacon readers who generously donated or signed up for our Patreon campaign. Your contribution helps keep us financially healthy. If you donated and would like some of our Sunset Beacon branded products (tote bag, pens, coffee mug, hat or shirt), please send an email to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. We would also like to share just your name in the paper to thank you. Please let us know if that is OK. To donate, please visit our website to sign up for our Patreon campaign or send send a check to: Sunset Beacon, P.O. Box 16035, SF, CA, 94116. Thank you!

Announcements: $1 per word, 20-word minimum. Share birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, births, obituaries, graduations, sports highlights, business accomplishments, retirements, college admissions, etc.

FREE: Add a name to the monthly birthday list or submit free community events at no charge. FREE: There is no charge for occasional announcements for small businesses celebrating an anniversary or other significant milestone or event. Send announcement to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Announcements will run in the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers (36,200 copies) and on RichmondSunsetNews.com (more than 20,000 views per month). Ads must be pre-paid. Deadline: 20th of the month. Mail check to: P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116. Call 415-706-6428 or email editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com for more details.

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Police Blotter

Assault: 3600 Block of Santiago Street, Dec. 6, 10:32 a.m.

Officers responded to a report of a person being assaulted by a Taser.

The victim told officers that the suspect, a longtime acquaintance, pushed the door open and used a Taser the victim.

The suspect left the scene.

Possession of a Firearm: Lincoln Way and 40th Avenue, Dec. 6, 6:07 p.m.

Officers observed a vehicle failing to stop at a stop sign and conducted a traffic stop.

A check on all the occupants revealed that one of the occupants was on probation with a search condition.

After further investigation, officers located a firearm and illegal narcotics.

Two people were detained; one was cited and one was arrested.

Brandishing a Weapon: 1700 Block of Ninth Avenue, Dec. 7, 6:25 p.m.

The victim was walking his dog when a suspect exited a vehicle and brandished a knife.

The suspect told the victim to pick up after his dog. The suspect grabbed the victim. After a brief struggle, the suspect left the scene.

Assault, Robbery: 10th Avenue and Ortega Street, Dec. 8, 1:30 p.m.

Officers responded to a hospital regarding a victim of a robbery and gunshot wound.

The victim told officers that he met the suspect, someone he had worked with in the past, to sell a tablet. The suspect told the victim he did not have any money, shot the victim in the leg took the item and fled the scene.

The victim went home and passed out and went to the hospital the next day.

Driving While Under the Influence of Alcohol: 23rd Avenue and Taraval Street, Dec. 13, 10:48 p.m.

A vehicle crashed into a bus shelter. The driver of the vehicle was determined to be driving while under the influence of alcohol and was arrested.

Vandalism: 19th Avenue and Irving Street, Dec. 19, 10:21 a.m.

A Muni driver honked at another vehicle causing the vehicle's driver to get upset.

The driver got out of his vehicle and kicked the glass doors causing the glass to shatter. The suspect stayed on the scene and was later arrested.

Matisse

Continued from page 1

the most vibrant and dynamic works of his career.

He no longer had the mobility to paint or sculpt. However, Matisse reinvented himself by turning to "drawing with scissors," which he had secretly experimented with in the past. The cut-out technique was innovative – his invention. It was the first time cut-outs were used as a medium, rather than as a tool. His assistants helped prepare the paper in vibrant colors using gouache (opaque watercolor paint) and he cut it into simple shapes that would be arranged as decoupage and collages to his liking.

While working on "Jazz," Matisse was often in pain and was plagued with various ailments, including liver problems, deteriorating vision and insomnia. The silver lining of his chronic insomnia greatly informed the composition of "Jazz." Working with artificial light at night led to nighttime scenes, including figures surrounded by deep blue-sky hues.

The imagery of "Jazz" combines whimsical with themes of horror. The viewer can interpret each plate in different ways. Matisse was apolitical while living in Southern France during the war. But there are references to figures of that time, such as in the piece, "The Wolf."

"He had family members in the resistance. He felt anxiety and despair," Lauricella said. "The symbolism of 'The Wolf' is the Nazi Gestapo. 'The Wolf' has a menacing head and a purple background."

"The Nightmare of the White Elephant," with its jagged red slashes that pierce the elephant balancing precariously on a small ball, may reflect how isolated Matisse felt trapped in his

Natalia Lauricella, curator of Prints and Drawings at the FAMSF. *Photo by Noma Faingold.*

physical confinement and in his life as a driven, anxious artist. In the "Jazz" text, he writes, "An artist must never be a prisoner. Prisoner? An artist should never be a prisoner of himself, prisoner of style, prisoner of reputation, prisoner of success, etc."

Lauricella's goals in mounting the "Matisse Jazz Unbound" exhibit is "to show how inventive he was and interested in printing and in making artist books," she said. "He was a true multimedia artist."

In the second paragraph of "Jazz," Matisse made his intentions clear in the oversized cursive text.

"All that I really have to recount are observations and notes made during the course of my life as a painter," he wrote. "I ask those who will have the patience to read these notes the indulgence usually granted to the writings of painters."

"Matisse Jazz Unbound" will be exhibited Jan. 25-July 6, at the de Young Museum, 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive. Learn more at famsf.org.

Tree Recycling

Continued from page 2

Let's send them to the composting facility for beneficial reuse. Please put your tree at the curb, next to your bins, on your scheduled collection day during the first two weeks of January. Recology will pick up your Christmas tree and make sure it gets recycled," said Robert Reed, spokesperson for Recology.

The winter holidays are San Francisco's largest recycling weeks of the year. Christmas tree recycling helps keep San Francisco clean and green by reducing materials sent to landfill and preventing improper disposal and illegal dumping.

It is also important for safety reasons to recycle your tree during the first two weeks of January.

"In just a few seconds, even a well-watered Christmas tree can catch fire and create a dangerous hazard," said the San Francisco Fire Department. "By properly disposing of the trees, you remove this hazard. Be SFFD safe this holiday season and properly dispose of your trees and other natural decorations."

The City also wants to remind residents to take extra care and properly sort their recyclables during the giving season. Utilize the blue recycling bin for all bottles, cans, paper and other recyclables. Flatten all cardboard boxes to save space you will need in your recycling bin for extra material. Ribbons, twines and Styrofoam packing cubes go in the landfill bin. Please visit SFRecycles.org for additional guidance to be better at the bin.

Additional information is available online at Recology.com. Residents and businesses can contact Recology at CustomerService@RecologySF.com or call 415-330-1300.

Kilduff's Korner

By Paul Kilduff

'PHOTOS OF THE MONTH' ONLINE GALLERY

Photographers are invited to submit three of their best photos for consideration to be published in the "Photos of the Month" gallery on RichmondSunsetNews.com. The website averages 20,000 views per month. Please submit photos as jpegs on or near the 15th of each month. Photos only – no captions. For more information, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com or call 415-706-6428.

Photo courtesy of the California Academy of Sciences. https://calacademy.org.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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Creating Our Best Sunset

You may have seen the news that I'm facing a recall attempt over my support for putting Proposition K on the ballot.

I'm humbled by the views of residents who opposed the measure. Many said they didn't feel heard in the process, and I take their concerns to heart.

No matter how you voted, we can all agree that improving street and pedestrian safety while helping drivers get where they need to go is a top priority.

As we kick off 2025, I'm excited to announce the significant progress we've made to invest and upgrade the Sunset's traffic and pedestrian safety infrastructure.

I've been coordinating city and state agencies to accelerate the completion of:

- The Sunset Boulevard improvement and repaving project led by the Department of Public Works.
- A new traffic signal at Sloat and Skyline boulevards led by SFMTA, which replaces a three-way stop sign bottleneck.
- A new traffic signal at Skyline and Great Highway led by Catrans, which allows for a smoother commute on Skyline and safer pedestrian crossing from Lake Merced to planned hiking trails near the coast (the light will only turn red when a pedestrian is present). This signal will also direct traffic into a new parking lot for access to the coast.

This new infrastructure will be ready in the next month or so, demonstrating major quality-of-life improvements for drivers in early 2025.

My advocacy helped secure millions of dollars for new traffic signals on Lincoln Way at La Playa and on Lincoln at 45th Avenue. There will also be intersection upgrades at Great Highway and Lincoln. Two lanes of traffic will be able to turn left onto Lincoln simultaneously, greatly improving traffic flow during the morning commute.

I'm also working closely with our new mayor, Daniel Lurie, to deliver traffic improvements at 41st Avenue and Lincoln. We are cutting through the bureaucracy to see results in a matter of months versus what normally has taken years. Mayor Lurie and I agree we need to put key traffic improvements in place before any road closure on the Great Highway.

Through my work with the County Transportation Authority (CTA) – each city supervisor also serves as a commissioner on the CTA board – I have funded more than six miles of new stop signs, safer crosswalks and speed humps in District 4. Many of these treatments are targeted on streets adjacent to the Sunset's schools. These improvements help make our neighborhood safer for everyone.

I strive to be a responsive and accessible supervisor, working to fix everything from trash cans to broken benches.

As supervisor, I have:

- Created night markets with community partners.
- Brought more police protection to the Sunset.
- Successfully fought to bring algebra back to middle schools.
- Restored parking access at Lower Great Highway.
- Secured funding for the Sunset Boulevard greenway.
- Delivered relief funds to Taraval merchants.
- Funded new traffic infrastructure on Lincoln Way.
- Legislated the ability to create more middle-income and senior housing.
- Started a new Fourth of July parade tradition.
- Launched the Sunset Community Band.

Many Sunset residents are telling me they do not support a recall – and they include voters who didn't agree with me on Prop. K.

The entirety of my work – not just one issue – is what matters. Sunset residents like how I focus on public safety, fight for education, champion small businesses and support the housing that families need to stay in San Francisco.

Residents also know that the proposed recall will not change the outcome or implementation of Prop. K.

A number of Sunset residents are reaching out to tell me why they're supporting me. I've created a new website to share their statements: StopTheEngardioRecall.com.

If you want to join them, please visit the website to add your voice.

Recall or not, I will continue to serve your needs. If you require assistance with anything in your neighborhood, my staff and I will be happy to help. My door, phone and email in-box are open to you anytime and I am committed to working with you to address your concerns.

Together, we can create our best Sunset.

Joel Engardio is the District 4 representative on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He can be reached at engardio.com/contact.

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Letters

Continued from page 7

choice that undermines urban community, economic equity and traditional transportation infrastructure. San Francisco needs robocars "like a hole in the head" – it needs transportation solutions that genuinely serve all residents, not just the privileged few.

Tom Zimberoff

Editor:

On Dec. 10, 2024, the SF Board of Supervisors had a review of the SF Municipal Transportation Agency's decisions on overnight RV parking restrictions and have decided to reverse the decision made in October to ban or limit overnight parking.

Upon viewing the online video of the meeting, I noticed the only people who were in attendance were from nonprofits or the RV people. This meeting was not well publicized considering its importance; therefore, the citizen's voice went unheard. (https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/player/clip/47999?view_id=10&meta_id=1105886&redirect=true.)

The first dozen RV owners seemed respectful to the neighborhood, but rapidly things got out of control. I spoke with the local city gardener who maintained the berm. She mentioned that she befriended several of the women and brought them supplies and removed their trash, but shortly thereafter she realized that it was just too dangerous.

The RV women disclosed that some of the new members of their enclave were raping them. She found gun casings, hypodermic needles, they were dumping their toilets in the street and it was reported that one of the people was chasing after another member of the group with an ax. Unfortunately, one of the drug dealers or pimps assaulted the gardener and gave her a brain injury.

Several of the RV people had hoarding impulses and would strew their treasures and waste into the streets. Some of the more aggressive members would stand in the street with their pit pulls and try to intimidate people from coming into their self-proclaimed area. And then came the marauding drug dealers and pimps in their fancy cars.

One of the RV people got mad at another RV person and committed arson to the RV. My nextdoor neighbor's house was broken into and she had to lock herself in the bathroom until the cops arrived as he had a knife. I now sleep with a knife near my bed and have feared going to work as the RVs were parked right in front of my home.

Former District 4 Supervisor Gordon Mar planned to create a 100+ RV triage center at the Zoo near the children's Pomeroy Rehabilitation Center. Gordon couldn't manage 10 RVs, let alone 100. Our district was renamed "Tenderloin West" under his watch. We only successfully got some of the inhabitants removed when it was uncovered that some of them weren't allowed near children or a school.

It isn't right that our City applies the laws differently to different groups of people and depending on whether the neighborhood is wealthy or not.

If the City/Bay Area truly cared, the RVs could have been temporarily housed at the abandoned movie theater lot at Stonestown instead of on Winston Drive, or purchased the 800-acre plot near a BART station in the East Bay for $5 million, which is significantly cheaper than $140,000 per parking spot at Candlestick Point, and then use the savings for water, sewer, trash removal, etc.

Let's make the streets in front of the supervisor's homes dedicated RV overnight zones until they come up with a rational and humane solution.

Michael Nohr

San Francisco Story

Cute eight-sided tower in Golden Gate Park's Polo Fields. No coffee available...

Woody LaBounty

Ponies of the Past

Several months ago, we got through Golden Gate Park's concert season, and the grassy meadows and fields were in recovery mode from the stages, tents, beer stalls and tens of thousands of tromping, dancing feet of the Outside Lands and Hardly Strictly Bluegrass festivals.

How many of those music lovers wondered if polo had ever really been played on the Polo Fields, what the heck its strange eight-sided tower was for and why wasn't someone selling some decent pour-over coffee out of it?

I can answer the first two questions. You'll have to ask the Recreation and Park Department about the coffee question. Seems like a good idea to me.

The Sporting Set

We fight over whether people should be able to drive in Golden Gate Park or whether it should be turned over to slower, more human-powered activities. It is not a new issue.

The first fine paths and lanes created in the 1870s attracted speeding carriages, buggies, phaetons, surreys and the annoying Tesla drivers of the day: Young men who wanted to show off and race each other on horseback. These guys would totally gallop past you in the restricted bus lane today.

Another not-new issue: People with money can usually get what they want in Golden Gate Park.

In the late 1880s, a group of wealthy sporting men tired of being chided for running over be-bustled women and petticoated children convinced the Park Commission to create a straight, flat "speed track" just for their racing.

They did this using one of the oldest tricks in the book, one that still works today. If the City created it as a benefit to "the people," they, the rich guys, promised to pay for its upkeep, improvements, etc.

As usual, the commissioners fell for it.

The speed track ran roughly from Rainbow Falls at today's John F. Kennedy Drive straight southwest through Speedway Meadow (now officially Hellman Hollow, but let's pretend that awkward rechristening never happened, shall we?) and on along what is now the southern boundary of the Polo Fields through "little" Speedway Meadow on the west and ending just past where the Bercut Equitation circle is today.

Must have been fun, and it is a great origin story for the name Speedway Meadow.

The rich guys and the park commission could never agree upon a satisfactory maintenance plan and soon all were on to another great idea. How about an American version of the Roman Coliseum in the park?

The Stadium

The idea of lions eating Christians probably wasn't floated during Park Commission meetings, but chariot races might have been. Because as much fun as racing in a straight line on horseback was, the real sport for lovers of the track in the 19th century was harness racing.

You know, guys with whips perched on little gigs going around in circles. It was the NASCAR stock car circuit of the time.

Because it was a shocking disgrace that a world-class city like San Francisco didn't have a proper track in its public park, rich men pushed for the creation of one and even pledged, even pinky promised, to raise the money for a stadium if the City would just get it started.

Yep, the Park Commission fell for it again. At least this time it did get some money from the racers, using $20,000 from the Amateur Driving Association to help create what we today know as the Polo Fields. The big dedication ceremony was held three months after the 1906 earthquake and fire.

The hobbies of the wealthy also included another equine activity – polo. You and I might play at being well-to-do by golfing, but wheat is separated from chaff when you start talking about investing in polo ponies.

Polo had been played on Golden Gate Park's Big Rec field in the 1890s. By 1904, the plutocrat set began constructing dedicated polo fields in San Mateo and Burlingame.

Rudolph Spreckels became seriously bitten by the polo bug, and since his brother, Adolph B. Spreckels, was the chair of San Francisco's Park Commission, polo was promised to be a major use of the new stadium. And, of course, the polo-ists promised to kick in funding.

The harness racers could speed around the mile oval and the polo ponies could romp in the bowl, and all the rich horse owners would be benefactors of the big project. That was the general idea.

In 1907, the City received a donation to build an octagonal judge's stand for the finish line of the harness race track, a perch to make decisions on close finishes.

The Amateur Driving Club kicked in money to build the first section of concrete bleachers across from the judge's stand in April 1909, the big start to the Reid Brothers architects' 150,000-seat California version of the Colosseum.

But that was it for the Colosseum plan. For most of my lifetime that hulk of seats, stranded a mile away from any action on the grassy bowl of the polo fields, was a mysterious piece of random detritus apparently dropped there by alien visitors.

The concrete bleachers proved handy in 1911 for the ground-breaking ceremony of the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition, when President William Howard Taft turned a spade of earth beside the judge's stand. In the end, however, almost all the fair's activities were in today's Marina District, where a whole new temporary stadium and track were constructed.

Finishing or improving a project just doesn't attract the big bucks, then or now.

Anyway, that's where the tower came from, part of a plan to host horse races that didn't quite take off because rich people have short attention spans and new diversions came on the scene.

Polo Anyone?

Polo players, it turned out, didn't want to bring their ponies up to San Francisco and kept their games on fine club fields on the peninsula.

Harness racing had a heyday at the new stadium, but died away as raising and racing horses gave way to tinkering with and driving gas-powered machines.

By the 1920s, Colosseum dreams shifted to a new popular sport called football. It was called a shocking disgrace that a world-class city like San Francisco didn't have a proper modern venue for the sport (here we go again), and rather than adapt the 15-year-old oval along the old Speed Track, a whole new project, Kezar Stadium, was erected on the old park nursery near Stanyan and Haight streets.

Polo finally came back to the park in 1922, when the local subcommittee of the American Polo Association wanted to make the sport more "accessible" and arranged a few matches at the old stadium.

Once Kezar was constructed and the park nominally had two stadiums, the name "Polo Fields" became commonly used for the older field in the western half of Golden Gate Park.

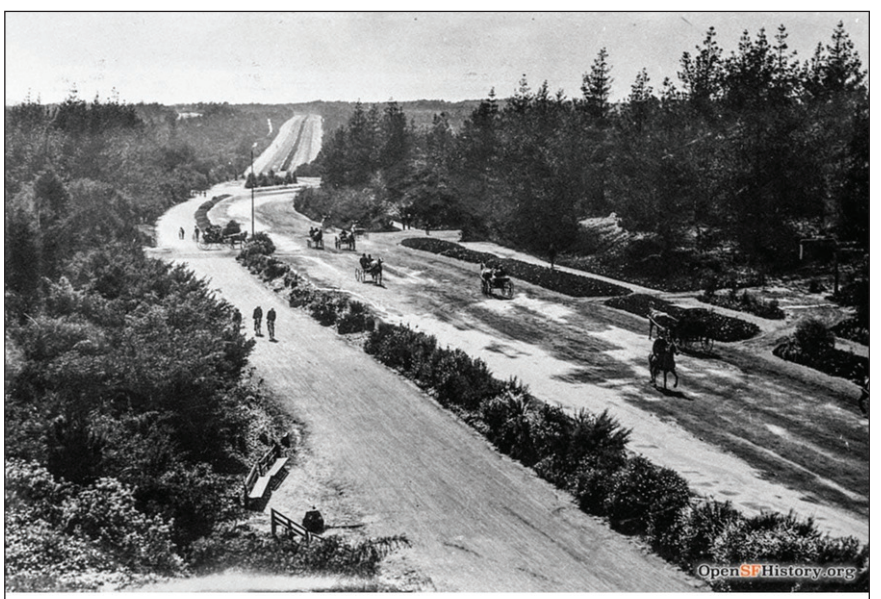
The local polo folks were instrumental in getting the bowl's wooden bleachers installed. Matches were played off and on there through the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, along with bicycle races, soccer, marching bands, model airplane tournaments, rugby matches, prayer rallies, and later rock concerts.

I believe it has been about 60 years since a polo pony trotted on the turf.

Historian Woody LaBounty was born and lives in the Richmond District and has spent most of his life on San Francisco's west side. LaBounty and a friend started the Western Neighborhoods Project (WNP). After he retired from his position as WNP's executive director, he moved over to San Francisco Heritage where he is the president and CEO.

This story and photos with captions were reprinted with permission by LaBounty. To read more and sign up for his weekly newsletters, go to sanfranciscostory.com.

Harness race on the outer track of the Polo Fields, circa 1910. (OpenSFHistory / wnp33.03913)



Speed track in Golden Gate Park, 1890s. (OpenSFHistory/wnp33.00934)

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